

curls over the wound—a sure sign that it continues growing; and hence it is evident, that the hollow oaks of enormous size recorded by antiquaries, did not obtain such bulk whilst sound; for the shell increases when the substance is no more. The blea, and the inner bark, receive annual tributes of nutritious particles, from the sap, in its progress to the leaves; and from thence acquire a power of extending the outer bark, and increasing its circumference slowly. Thus a tree, which at three hundred years old was sound, and five feet in diameter, like the Langley Oak, would, if left to perish gradually, in its thousandth year become a shell of ten feet diameter."

"Hence," says Mr. Rooke, "we find by this curious investigation of the growth of oaks, that a tree of about thirty feet in circumference may be supposed to have attained the age of a thousand years. Upon this calculation we may conclude, that the Great Saley Forest Oak, which is only within two inches of forty-seven feet in circumference, cannot be less than fifteen hundred years old."

PLATE X.—THE ABBOT'S OAK.

This tree stands in the front of the noble residence of His Grace the Duke of Bedford, at Woburn Abbey. It does not appear to have found the soil favourable to its growth, as, though of considerable age, it is small in its dimensions, and to a fanciful imagination it might seem that it had refused to extend its branches, after having been compelled to bear upon them, according to a tradition on which its chief interests depends, the venerable Abbot of the monastery, under whose protecting walls it had been reared; and who, together with the Vicar of Puddington, was hanged at Woburn, in the year 1537, by order of Henry VIII., for refusing to give up his monastery, according to the decree of that rapacious and arbitrary monarch. "Roger Hobbs," says Dodds, in his History of Woburn, "the Abbot at that time, nobly disdaining to compromise his conscience for a pension, as the most of his brethren then did, and as many others, who do not wear a cowl, do in the *present* day, resolutely denied the King's supremacy, and refused to surrender his sacerdotal rights. For this contumacious conduct he was, in 1537, together with the Vicar of Puddington, in this county, and others who opposed the requisition, hanged on an Oak Tree in the front of the monastery, which is standing in the present day. He was drawn to the place of execution in a sledge, as is the custom with state prisoners." p. 38. Stowe thus mentions the fate of the Abbot of Woburn, along with that of others of his clerical brethren, in the same cause. 1537—"The 10th of March, John Paslow, bachelor of Divinitie, then being the five and twentieth Abbot of the Abbey of Whalley in Lincolnshire, was executed at Lancaster. More about the same time, the Abbot of Sawley, in Lancashire, with one Astbebe, a Monk of Gervaux, was executed. Also Robert Hops, Abbot of Woborne in Bedfordshire, with the Prior of the same house, and the Parson of Puddington, were executed at Woborne."

Chronicle: folio, 1681. p. 474.

These historical facts lose nothing of their interest by the following beautiful allusions to them in the lines of a poet, whose effusions have been already too favourably received by the public, to require apology for inserting any of them in this place.

O 'twas a ruthless deed, enough to pale
Freedom's bright fires, that doom'd to shameful death,
Those who maintain'd their faith with latest breath,
And scorn'd before the despot's frown to quail!
Yet 'twas a glorious hour, when from the gaol
Of papal tyranny the mind of man
Dared to break loose, and triumph'd in the ban
Of thunders roaring on the distant gale!

Yes, old memorial of the mitred monk,
Thou livest to flourish in a brighter day,
With seeming joy, and pure and patriot vows
Are breathed where Superstition reign'd—thy trunk
Its glad green garlands wears, though in decay,
And pious red-breasts warble from thy boughs.—

J. W. WIFFIN.

PLATE XI.—THE CHANDOS OAK.

This luxuriant tree stands in the pleasure-grounds of Michendon House, at Southgate, the property of His Grace the Duke of Buckingham. Its girth at one foot from the ground is eighteen feet three inches; at three feet, it is fifteen feet nine inches. The height of the stem to the branches is eight feet; and at that distance